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Consumer Price Index, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land – April 2019

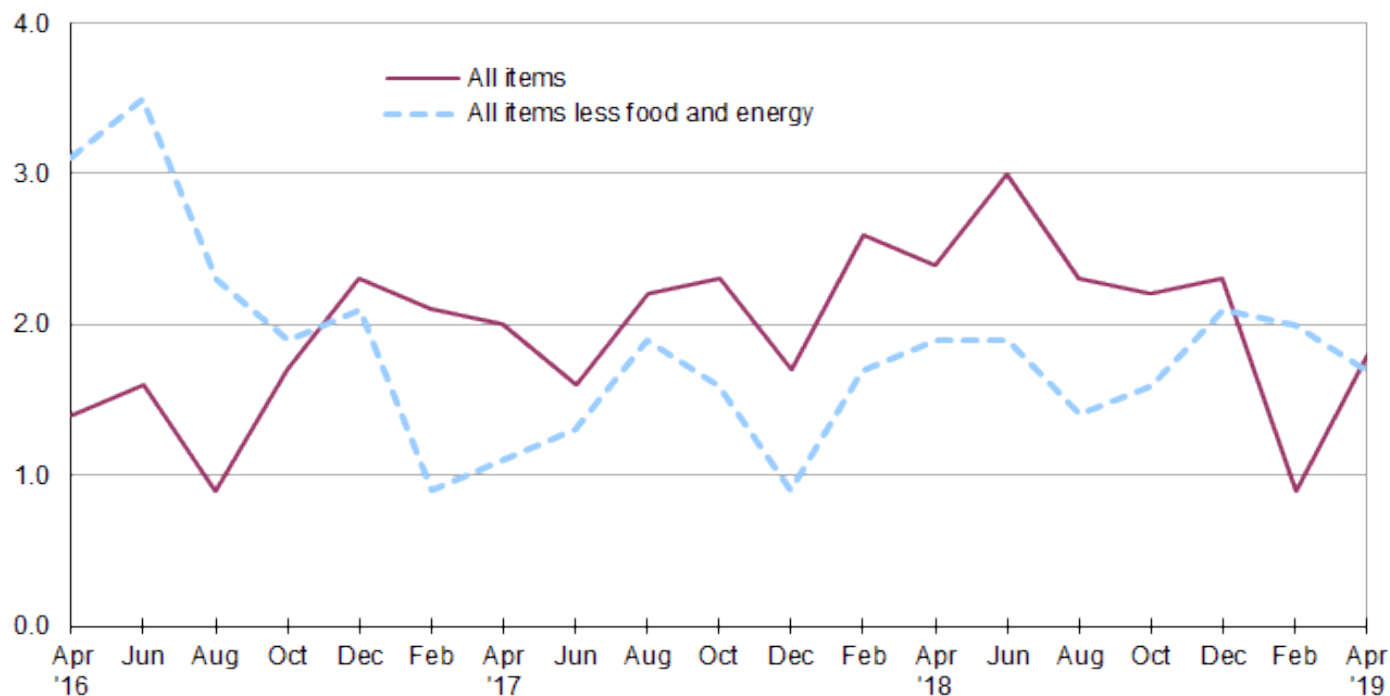
Area prices rise 1.1 percent in March and April; up 1.8 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) in the Houston area increased 1.1 percent in March and April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Stanley W. Suchman, Assistant Commissioner for Regional Operations, noted that all three of the major sub-components contributed to the current rise, though higher energy prices accounted for more than 80 percent of the total advance. The energy index climbed 11.0 percent in March and April, food prices rose 0.6 percent, and the index for all items less food and energy increased 0.2 percent. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, short-term changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

During the year ended in April 2019, the all items CPI-U advanced 1.8 percent and the index for all items less food and energy increased 1.7 percent. (See [chart 1](#) and [table 1](#).)

Chart 1. Over-the-year percent change in CPI-U, Houston, TX, April 2016–April 2019

Percent change



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Food

Local food prices rose 0.6 percent in March and April, after increasing 0.3 percent in January and February. Between the two components of the index, prices for food at home (grocery store prices) rose 0.7 percent and prices for food away from home increased 0.5 percent.

From April 2018 to April 2019, the food index advanced 2.2 percent, its fastest 12-month rate since December 2017. The latest annual change reflected the combined effects of a 2.7-percent increase in prices for food away from home and a 1.7-percent rise in grocery store prices.

Energy

The energy index climbed 11.0 percent in March and April following a 9.0-percent drop in January and February. The biggest contributor to the current increase was a 28.7-percent jump in motor fuel prices. This was the sharpest bimonthly rate of increase in motor fuel prices since March and April 2007. Natural gas prices also rose during the latest period, up 2.5 percent, while electricity prices fell 5.4 percent.

During the year ended in April 2019, the energy index rose 2.7 percent, with all sub-components contributing to the advance. Electricity prices were up 3.9 percent over the year, motor fuel costs rose 2.2 percent, and natural gas costs increased 0.6 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged up 0.2 percent in March and April, after increasing 1.1 percent in January and February. During the latest period, prices rose for apparel, shelter, public transportation, household furnishings and operations, and used cars and trucks. Offsetting some of these increases, prices fell during the period for motor vehicle insurance, new vehicles, alcoholic beverages, education and communication, recreation, and medical care.

From April 2018 to April 2019, the index for all items less food and energy rose 1.7 percent. The biggest factor in the annual increase was a 2.5-percent rise in shelter costs, led by a 3.2-percent advance in owners' equivalent rent. Other large contributors to the annual increase were higher prices for medical care (3.5 percent) and household furnishings and operations (5.4 percent).

The June 2019 Consumer Price Index for All Items for Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land is scheduled to be released Thursday, July 11, 2019.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details, see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, *The Consumer Price Index*, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, Texas, Core Based Statistical Area** includes the counties of Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery, and Waller.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019	Apr. 2018	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019
All items	226.804	-	229.261	1.8	1.1	-
All items (1967 = 100)	727.443	-	735.323			
Food and beverages	232.257	-	232.981	1.8	0.3	-
Food	232.679	-	234.017	2.2	0.6	-
Food at home	225.717	224.475	227.218	1.7	0.7	1.2
Cereals and bakery products	264.615	-	267.552	0.7	1.1	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	246.952	-	247.936	0.3	0.4	-
Dairy and related products	176.012	-	174.837	-2.4	-0.7	-
Fruits and vegetables	282.041	-	283.466	1.5	0.5	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	286.993	-	284.696	2.5	-0.8	-
Other food at home	196.310	-	200.607	4.8	2.2	-
Food away from home	235.884	-	237.045	2.7	0.5	-
Alcoholic beverages	215.331	-	206.388	-4.4	-4.2	-
Housing	223.816	-	223.617	2.9	-0.1	-
Shelter	264.671	264.976	265.432	2.5	0.3	0.2
Rent of primary residence	258.411	258.095	259.746	1.1	0.5	0.6
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)	246.657	245.825	247.053	3.2	0.2	0.5
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)	246.657	245.825	247.053	3.2	0.2	0.5
Fuels and utilities	186.061	-	180.107	3.2	-3.2	-
Household energy	164.209	158.609	156.940	3.4	-4.4	-1.1
Energy services	161.560	156.024	154.376	3.5	-4.4	-1.1
Electricity	162.753	156.429	153.989	3.9	-5.4	-1.6
Utility (piped) gas service	140.743	140.739	144.328	0.6	2.5	2.6
Household furnishings and operations	136.086	-	137.455	5.4	1.0	-
Apparel	189.698	-	194.781	-0.6	2.7	-
Transportation	178.896	-	188.465	0.5	5.3	-
Private transportation	178.455	-	187.884	0.5	5.3	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	88.523	-	88.460	0.6	-0.1	-
New vehicles(1)	166.326	-	164.775	2.0	-0.9	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	228.222	-	230.526	1.0	1.0	-
Motor fuel	178.793	205.379	230.155	2.2	28.7	12.1
Gasoline (all types)	178.027	205.079	230.403	2.1	29.4	12.3
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	178.778	207.463	233.713	2.3	30.7	12.7
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	198.352	219.892	243.751	2.1	22.9	10.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	205.710	224.308	246.926	0.9	20.0	10.1
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	732.765	-	708.611	-3.5	-3.3	-
Medical care	507.833	-	507.245	3.5	-0.1	-
Recreation(3)	106.083	-	105.436	1.7	-0.6	-
Education and communication(3)	120.506	-	120.115	-0.9	-0.3	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,260.589	-	1,260.589	3.3	0.0	-
Other goods and services	416.071	-	416.780	1.3	0.2	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	172.911	-	178.093	0.9	3.0	-
Commodities less food and beverages	144.443	-	151.017	0.4	4.6	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	191.603	-	208.657	0.2	8.9	-
Durables	100.242	-	100.287	0.7	0.0	-
Services	281.962	-	281.622	2.4	-0.1	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter	212.593	-	215.686	1.5	1.5	-
All items less medical care	213.420	-	215.943	1.7	1.2	-
Commodities less food	146.880	-	153.165	0.3	4.3	-

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019	Apr. 2018	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019
Nondurables	212.036	-	221.216	1.0	4.3	-
Nondurables less food.....	192.735	-	208.390	-0.1	8.1	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	298.719	-	297.075	2.3	-0.6	-
Services less medical care services.....	259.726	-	259.361	2.3	-0.1	-
Energy	170.874	179.614	189.730	2.7	11.0	5.6
All items less energy	235.652	-	236.175	1.8	0.2	-
All items less food and energy	235.986	-	236.369	1.7	0.2	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on an April 1978=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a December 1982=100 base.

(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Index on a December 1993=100.

- Data not available.